# CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 63 December 20th, 1960.

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The Norwegian programmes are produced by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, one of the biggest evangelization organizations in Norway, and the Swedish ones by the Evangelical National Missionary Society of Sweden, a pietistic organization within the Lutheran National Church. Both organizations, however, work in co-operation with other groups on the programmes. The strength of the new broadcasting station will be 100 kilowatts and it will be on the air every evening on the 42-metre band. All the programmes will be recorded on tape in Norway and Sweden and will include lectures, religious services, commentaries, talks on current affairs, as well as programmes of informations and entertainment.

## DENMARK

## Copenhagen's New Bishop Willing to Ordain Women.

In a statement to the "Kristeligt Dagblad" the new Bishop of the Diocese of Copenhagen, Bishop Willy Westergaard Madsen, who was consecrated in the Cathedral of Copenhagen together with the new Bishop of Elsinore, Bishop J. Leer Andersen, on Sunday December 18th, declares that he "will have no objections to supervising or ordaining women pastors". For a number of years women have been able to take orders in the Danish Lutheran National Church and only one of the present Bishops, Bishop Christian Baun of Viborg, refuses to supervise or ordain women ministers for reasons of conscience.

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In an interview with the "Kristeligt Dagblad" the new Bishop of Copenhagen says that he considers a National Church to be of the greates value and that he would regard it as a calamity if it were to change this character. In this connection Bishop Westergaard Madsen emphasizes the duty of the National Church to serve the people and he feels that the Church has not been sufficiently alive to the burning issues in the nation, as for instance the problems connected with people's place of work, the conditions of well-being at such places, the consequences of mechanization, and matters concerning management and labour union movements.

"Episcopal Contamination".

In the latest number of the "Oekumeniske Nyheder", organ of the Ecumenical Council of Denmark, Mr. Johannes Aagaard Lecturer at the University of Aarhus, has raised the question of considering anew the consequences of Apostolic Succession in regard to relations among the Churches.

The reason for his suggestion is the double consecration of the two new Bishops at which, presumably, the usual practice at episcopal consecrations would be followed, according to which only bishops belonging to Churches which do not recognize the Apostolic Succession may take part in the laying on of hands while, for instance, the bishop representing the Swedish sister church must keep in the background.

Mr. Aagaard points out that to ordinary people it does not make sense that the Swedish bishop must not take part in the laying on of hands since our Church expressly emphasizes the non-importance of Apostolic Succession, and he talks sarcastically about fear of "episcopal contamination".

The article intimates that the present practice must be due to a fear of High Church tendencies gaining added impetus if the Apostolic Succession were to be admitted into the Danish Lutheran National Church.

Apostolic Succession, Baptism, and Church Unity.

It may become necessary, in consideration of Church unity, to recognize the Apostolic Succession in the mission churches, Professor N.H. Søe said recently at a meeting in Copenhagen arranged by the Danish Missionary Council.

The Professor was not at all happy, from a Lutheran point of view, that the question of the ecclesiastical office has come so much to the foreground in the ecumenical orbit. According to a report in the "Kristeligt Dagblad" he said further:

"It may be questioned whether anything would happen by recognizing the Apostolic Succession. The danger lies in creating a division between those who would attach importance to it and those who would not".

The speaker did not feel the time had come for such a recognition here at home, but that there might be reason for it on the mission fields for the sake of Church unity if it should prove to be the only way of achieving fellowship with Churches who had the Apostolic Succession.

As to baptism, Professor Søe advocated fellowship among Churches practising infant baptism and those practising adult baptism. But the presupposition must be mutual recognition so that nobody baptized as a child would have to be rebaptized. In the Old Church the two practices of baptism lived happily side by side, the Professor pointed out.

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Professor Prenter Going to Strasbourg for a Year.

Professor Regin Prenter, Aarhus, has accepted an invitation from the University of Strasbourg to take over for a year the vacant professorial chair of Dogmatics, as from the autumn of 1961.

For a short period this autumn the Professor has been giving lectures at the University of Reykjavik.

Radio Advertizing Increases Church Attendance.

On the Saturday night leading up to the 1. Sunday in Advent the Danish Broadcasting Corporation broadcast the first programme in a series of three which are to encourage listeners to go to church. The programme was arranged by Secretary in the Corporation, Mr. Svend Alkaersig, in cooperation with a professional advertizing agent, Mr. Fritz Harlang, Managing Director, who for years has been advocating that the Church should make use of advertizing. The programme lasted for fifteen minutes, and besides a conversation with a clergyman about the meaning of Advent one heard short interviews with different church-goers, accompanied by distant organ music and hymn singing, and the feature closed with an appeal to go to church the next day.

The programme has caused some attention and also given rise to protests, alleging that it constitutes an infringement of the principle of the Corporation not to permit any advertizing in the broadcasts. Enquiries in the Press on the following Sunday showed that almost everywhere more people had been to church than is usual on the first Sunday in Advent, and that the general opinion was that this was a result of the radio broadcast.

Mr. Svend Alkaersig says to the "Kristeligt Dagblad" that he would like these programmes eventually to become a fixed item on Saturday nights and that the goal is to "fill every church in Denmark - every Sunday".

The next programme on December 17th was directed to Sunday motorists in particular, urging them to attend the church service at whatever place they might be.

## FINLAND

The "Hot-Buns-Church" and the Homeless.

During the last five years the Diakonia Centre of the Lutheran Church in Helsinki (Helsingfors) has been arranging special church services for homeless people and others living on the shady side of life. The enterprise is known popularly as "the-hot-buns-church" because the congregation are invited to coffee and buns after the service. Similar divine services are conducted at Turku (Åbo), Pori (Bjoerneborg) and Tampere (Tammerfors).

In Helsinki (Helsingfors) these special services are led by Rev. Vilho Närki who has been active in "street mission" work for four years. The church in which the services are held has accommodation for 120 people, he says, and in winter it is crowded with people who do not feel at home in the fellowship of the ordinary parish congregations, but evidently are at ease here. The greater part of the "hot-buns"-congregation are men.

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Film in the Service of the Church.

All through the autumn a lively debate has been going on in Finland on the employment of audio-visual means in the service of the Church. The Central Association for Parish Work has set up a television committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Kauko Pirinen, University Lecturer, and a radio committee with Mr. Yrjö Knuutila, B.D., in the Chair. Secretary of both committees is Rev. Heikki Kalima. Many parishes have had lecture dealing with film, radio and television in the service of the Church. An article in the religious paper "Kotimaa" reads among other things:

"Many congregations and their members - but not so much the clergy - are prejudiced against the screen in spite of the many instances of the positive value of films experienced also by the Church. ... Evidently there can be no real change in the attitude of Church people until the whole issue has been discussed openly and unprejudiced in the congregations. ... It would be of great importance if the big Christian central organizations would take part in the activities of the joint Christian film bureau. ... The Church must keep up with the times, also in matters of the screen, and begin a systematic exploitation of a weapon, about the effectiveness of which there can be no doubt in regard to the spreading of the message of the Church."

350 Years' Anniversary of a Church that has Disappeared.

At a special function last month in Helsinki (Helsingfors) the 350 years' anniversary of the Lutheran Church in Ingermanland was celebrated. Ingermanland is the country between the River Neva and Lake Peipus now belonging to the Soviet Union, but since old times the home-country of many Scandinavians and Germans. The decade from 1928-1938 constituded a period of harsh persecutions of the Lutheran Church in Ingermanland. The last confirmation took place in 1937 and all organized Lutheran church life in the district ceased in 1938.

At the anniversary gathering in Helsinki (Helsingfors) a number of former inhabitants of Ingermanland were present. Bishop Martti Simojoki and Rev. Akseli Kajanti, Rural Dean, among others, addressed the audience

The World Situation a Case of Schizophrenia.

On the occasion of the psychotherapy year a joint meeting for clergymen and physicians, at which Professor Wilhelm Kütemeyer, Heidelberg, gave a lecture, was held last month. The Professor emphasized the connection between the diseases of the individual and the diseases of society. A society may fall ill and be ill without the physicians being able to cure it. However, the number of physicians beginning to realize the illnesses of society has increased. So long as the world is sharply divided in two camps no psychiatrist can remain satisfied with the situation. He must look upon it as a case of Schizophrenia which may prove fatal if it is allowed to continue.

News in Brief:

- Dr. Aimo Murtonen, D.D., and Ph.D., has been appointed Head of Semitic Research at the University of Melbourne. Before becoming a theological scholar Dr. Murtonen was an ordinary labourer.

- Professor Osmo Tiililä has delivered eight widely attended lectures on "Death" in the "Old Church" in Helsinki (Helsingfors) during the autumn. In the spring the Professor was taken seriously ill on a journey in South America, and the lectures have been influenced by his personal experiences.

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## NORWAY

### The Church and the Wedding of the Princess.

Last month King Olav of Norway announced the engagement of his daughter Princess Astrid to a business man in Oslo, Mr. Johan Martin Ferner. The wedding is to take place in the church of Asker on January 12th and will be conducted by Bishop Arne Fjellbu, Trondheim (Nidaros), who is about to retire on account of age.

The announcement was received with mixed feelings as the future husband of the Princess has been divorced, and Church circles, not the least, have expressed regret at this fact. A leader in the religious daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" says that the marriage will "undoubtedly cause the first serious crack in the so far ideal relationship between the royal family and the Norwegian people. ... We could have wished that she had had wisdom and strength to make the same choice as did another princess in a similar painful situation some years ago: the path of duty as chosen by the Princess Margaret."

The "Morgenposten", an independent paper, points out, moreover, that by deciding on a church wedding the King has taken official stand in a matter about which there is great disunion in the nation, and of which the majority of clergymen in the Church, of which he is formally the head, have another opinion. This is a digression from Constitutional tradition, the paper feels, according to which the King may act only in questions about which the nation agrees.

From several quarters it is being strongly emphasized that the difficulties are due to the fact that the line between private and official life has not been clearly drawn. Nobody wants to interfere in the matter of whom the Princess marries, provided she does it privately and at the same time relinquishes her rank of Princess of Norway.

In the Norwegian Church divorced persons may remarry, but it is left to the discretion of the individual ministers whether they will agree to perform such a ceremony, and most clergymen and bishops feel that they cannot do so. In a statement to the Press the Bishop of Oslo, Bishop Johannes Smemo, has declared that he would have had to refuse for reasons of conscience if he had been asked to officiate at the wedding, but now the King has asked Bishop Fjellbu to do it. The Bishop has formerly married divorced persons.

### Episcopal Statement on the Act on Induced Abortion.

In a joint declaration, occasioned by the new Abortion Act mentioned in the last number of CN, the Norwegian Bishops state that induced abortion on social grounds is contrary to the established ethical standards of the present legislation and to Christian morality. The answer of the Church to such grounds must be: social distress must be relieved by social measures. The Bishops feel that, although the Act does not say so straight out, it may nevertheless be cited in support of induced abortion on social grounds, all depending on the standpoint and judgment of the individual physician. The Bishops' Conference therefore appeals to physicians to be aware of the danger and to show the utmost restraint in agreeing to induced abortion, especially when social considerations are involved.

## NORWAY

Dissenting to the declaration, Bishop Kristian Schjelderup, Hamar, in an appendix states that according to his fundamental view of life as being inviolable and sacrosanct he cannot find reasons for any graduation or classification of the cases, so that induced abortion may be justified in some cases and not in others. He therefore feels that in every case the decision must be left to the mother and her physician.

No Religious Influence by Social Institutions.

The Social-Democratic majority of the Social Committee of the Norwegian Parliament are against including a clergyman in the local teams in charge of public family consultation activities, as well as opposed to State subsidies to the family consultation work of the Norwegian Congregational Institute. The minority of the Committee, representing the non-Socialist Parties, are in favour of both proposals. The reason given for the attitude of the majority is that social institutions have no right to influence people who seek their help in a difficult situation in the direction of any particular conception of life or religious conviction.

In this connection the Rev. Albert Assev, Head of the Family Consultation Centre of the Congregational Institute, says that an ethical influence is inevitable in any consultative work, but that it is a far cry from exerting moral influence to religious propaganda and that the latter, naturally, is not the task of consultative instances.

More Divinity Students.

At the beginning of term 37 new divinity students had been entered at the Seminary of the Free Theological Faculty at Oslo and the number is expected to go up to around 50 at the end of term. This is considerably more than during the last few years. At the University Faculty of Theology the number of new students likewise shows a marked increase.

During the reading in the Norwegian Parliament of the Bill on clergymen's salaries, Dr. Per Lønning suggested that laymen should be allowed to take orders, and the former Minister of Communications, Rev. Kolbjørn Varmann, Labour, proposed that anyone graduated from a Norwegian university or any other higher educational institute should be entitled to be ordained in the Norwegian Lutheran National Church. According to Press reports a Bill to this effect will be introduced in Parliament in the new year.

News in Brief:

- The YMCA youth campaign, which during the last few years has been able to arrange a ten weeks' stay in Norwegian homes for 7,000 refugee children from Berlin, has now started a new drive for such a stay in Norway for yet 1,000 children.

- Three members of the Christian Liberal Party have proposed in Parliament that donations for purposes of charity amounting to up to 5 % of the taxable income should be taxfree.

- Bishop Bjarne Skard, Tönsberg, has been elected President of the new Diakonia Council in Norway under the Norwegian Lutheran National Church. Secretary General Andreas Grasmo, Oslo Home Mission, was elected Vice President.

- The present students' minister in Oslo, Rev. Alev Johnson, has been appointed Rector of the Practical-Theological Seminary of the University of Oslo. At the same time the present Rector of the Practical-Theological Seminary of the Free Theological Faculty, Dr. Carl Fr. Wisløff, has been appointed Professor of Church History at the Free Theological Faculty.

- The two new Norwegian Bishops, Bishop Fr. Birkeli, Stavanger, and Bishop Tord Godal, Nidaros, will be consecrated on January 15th in the Cathedral of Oslo by Bishop Johannes Smemo.

- In a big article in the periodical "Kirke og Kultur" the prominent conservative theologian Dr. Olav Valen-Sendstad has declared himself in favour of women ministers.

## SWEDEN

### Clergyman Sentenced for Refusing to Marry Divorced Person.

Rev. Alf Härdelin, Oeja near Eskilstuna, who is a minister in the Swedish Lutheran National Church, was sentenced recently by the District Court for dereliction of office. Last year Rev. Alf Härdelin had refused to marry a young couple because one of them was divorced, and in Sweden clergymen in the Lutheran National Church are compelled by law to marry anyone who asks them regardlessly of whether they are divorced. The minister was fined 75 Sw. Crowns. According to the law clergymen may be sentenced to up to 6 months' imprisonment or fined up to 1.000 Crowns for such an offence.

At the trial Bishop Gösta Lundström, Strängnäs, said that this was an instance of collision of duties which can be solved only by an amendment of the law which he hoped would soon be introduced. He quoted the Bible passages opposing divorce, and further referred to a promise given by a Minister at the time of passing the Act that no legal proceedings would be taken against clergymen who for reasons of conscience refused to remarry divorced persons. The Bishop said, moreover, that he himself had indirectly approved of ministers' refusing to remarry divorced people in as much as he had ordained several clergymen who had informed him in advance that they could not do so for reasons of conscience.

### Considerable Increase in Number of Theologians.

The number of new divinity students matriculated at the Faculties of Theology at Uppsala and Lund has gone up with 24 % to 151 this year. At Uppsala the increase was 30 % and at Lund 19 % as compared to last year.

### Approaching a United Lutheran Church in All of Africa?

During a visit to Sweden the Swedish Bishop Helge Fosseus, who last summer was elected Bishop of the joint Lutheran Zulu Church in South Africa for a period of five years, has said that he does not consider a joint Lutheran Church for all of Africa an unlikely future possibility.

In an interview with the "Svenska Dagbladet" he says that in a not too distant future the establishment of 5 or 6 big Lutheran regional churches may be expected in South Africa, one of them being English-speaking. A subsequent federation of these will then probably be natural in places where several races are represented and, taking a still longer view, he does not consider it a utopian idea to envisage a united Luthera Church for the whole of Africa.

Bishop Fosseus, whose diocese comprises all of Natal and parts of Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and the Cape Province, says that the synod in February of the Hermannsburg Mission is to decide finally on membership of the Zulu Church, and that the African clergymen taking part in the synod are strongly in favour of joining the Zulu Church.

Successful Courses on Marriage and Parenthood.

The Pedagogical Institute of the Diocese of Stockholm has been very successful in arranging courses on marriage and parenthood, no less than 36 such courses having been conducted during the last year of studies. The Institute is planning to publish three study books for parents next year besides picture reels and films. A reference book and syllabus for the marriage course are available already now and suitable picture reels to accompany them are under preparation.

Head of the Institute, Rev. Ottar Ottersen has suggested that the Swedish Lutheran National Church should establish a pedagogical institute for the whole country at which subjects relating to children's and young people's psychology and problems of education and of married life might be discussed.

Mrs. Ester Nyström on her Impressions of China.

As mentioned in the last number of CN Mrs. Ester Nyström, widow of the late missionary in China, Mr. Gustav Nyström, went on a long tour of China in the autumn on an invitation from the Chinese Church.

In some letters written on the journey and published in the "Svensk Veckotidning", organ of the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, she tells about her visit to Peking and participation in the divine services in three different churches. In all three places the preaching must be said to have been evangelical. In the "Mi-Si-Tang"-Church all seats were occupied, the congregation including both old and young people and the men being in the majority. Most of the audience had brought both Bible and hymn-book. Everyone took part in the Eucharist. At present there are 46 divinity students at the theological seminary at Peking.

In Nanking Mrs. Nyström visited Bishop Ting who is rector of the theological seminary there. There is living-in accommodation at the seminary for a hundred students and all places were filled. 30 of the students are women. The ecclesiastical course lasts for four years, and Greek and Hebrew are compulsory subjects. Every year the students do some weeks' manual labour at a Government work site, mostly agricultural work. Each church is responsible for the financial support of its students reading at the joint theological seminary.

Furthermore, Mrs. Nyström says that at the moment a Bible commission is engaged on a new translation of the Bible.

In an interview with the "Svenska Dagbladet" he says that it is not too distant future the establishment of 5 or 6 big Lutheran regional churches may be expected in South Africa, one of them being English speaking. A subsequent federation of these will then probably be natural in places where several races are represented and, taking a still longer view, he does not consider it a utopian idea to envisage a united Lutheran Church for the whole of Africa.

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## Successful Courses on Marriage and Parenthood.

The Pedagogical Institute of the Diocese of Stockholm has been very successful in arranging courses on marriage and parenthood, no less than 96 such courses having been conducted during the last year of studies. The Institute is planning to publish three study books for parents next year besides picture reels and films. A reference book and syllabus for the marriage course are available already now and suitable picture reels to accompany them are under preparation.

Head of the Institute Rev. Ottar Ottersen has suggested that the Swedish Lutheran National Church should establish a pedagogical institute for the whole country at which subjects relating to children's and young people's psychology and problems of education and of married life might be discussed.

## Mrs. Peter Nyström on her Impressions of China.

As mentioned in the last number of CH Mrs. Peter Nyström, widow of the late missionary in China, Mr. Gustav Nyström, went on a long tour of China in the autumn on an invitation from the Chinese Church.

In some letters written on the journey and published in the "Svenska Veckotidning", organ of the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, she tells about her visit to Peking and participation in the divine services in three different churches. In all three places the preaching must be said to have been evangelical. In the "Mi-shih-fang"-Church all seats were occupied, the congregation including both old and young people and the men being in the majority. Most of the audience had brought both Bible and hymn-book. Everyone took part in the Eucharist. At present there are 40 Vicinity students at the theological seminary at Peking.

In Nanking Mrs. Nyström visited Bishop Ting who is rector of the theological seminary there. There is living-in accommodation at the seminary for a hundred students and all places were filled. 30 of the students are women. The ecclesiastical course lasts for four years, and Greek and Hebrew are compulsory subjects. Every year the students do some weeks' manual labour at a Government work site, mostly agricultural work. Each church is responsible for the financial support of its students reading at the joint theological seminary.

Furthermore, Mrs. Nyström says that at the moment a Bible commission is engaged on a new translation of the Bible.

Big Free Church Joint Undertakings.

Dr. Ansgar Eeg-Olofsson, school master, who a short while ago was elected new Chairman of the Joint Committee of the Free Churches in Sweden has reported on his views on the ecumenical situation in an address in the Bethel Chapel in Stockholm.

In regard to relations with the Lutheran National Church Dr. Eeg-Olofsson was rather pessimistic. He emphasized that there is a very influential section in the National Church which attaches great importance to the ecclesiastical ministry and to which the Free Churches seem of a foreign nature.

One should not expect any close fellowship, either, among the Free Churches in the form of a united free church federation, he felt, but pointed instead to a number of definite tasks which might, and ought to, be undertaken jointly:

A joint strategy for evangelization activities for the whole country on the lines of the evangelization work in the suburbs of Stockholm ought to be worked out, taking as a pattern the ecumenically-minded congregations who admit people belonging to other denominations as "associative members".

The Free Churches ought jointly to employ a social secretary who should be in charge of the social contributions to society of the Free Churches.

And finally, the Free Churches in common ought to introduce a thorough training of youth leaders, providing a really qualified instruction, in view of the still better and better school education of the young people in Sweden.

News in Brief:

On January 2nd Bishop Anders Nygren, Lund, who has just passed 70 years of age, will leave for the U.S.A. where he for the next 15 months is to study Philosophy of Religion and give lectures. The Bishop has been invited by the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and the Ecumenical Institute at Evanston.

"Kyrklig Samling" which was founded as a movement in defence of Bible and Confession, has planned a national conference in Stockholm at the end of May, 1961. Representatives of similar movements in the other Northern countries are expected to take part in the conference.

Last month the Swedish Mission Covenant Church arranged a conference in Stockholm on church building. Architects, contractors, clergymen and others interested in the subject attended the conference. In the course of debate the connection between the views of the various denominations and the form given to the interiors of churches was particularly stressed.

## Free Church Joint Undertakings.

Dr. Ansgar Ilg-Olofsson, school master, who a short while ago was elected new Chairman of the Joint Committee of the Free Churches in Sweden has reported on his views on the communal situation in an address in the Bethel Chapel in Stockholm.

In regard to relations with the Lutheran National Church Dr. Olofsson was rather pessimistic. He emphasized that there is a very influential section in the National Church which attaches great importance to the ecclesiastical ministry and to which the Free Churches seem of a foreign nature.

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